

PARALEGAL INVESTIGATOR ROLE

Role Summary

The Paralegal Investigator Role consists of three grades (12 -15). The incumbents perform substantive legal work that, absent the paralegal investigator, would otherwise be performed by an attorney or hearings officer. Casework and problems addressed involve issues that are numerous and complex, requiring considerable research to identify, define, and develop applicable theories, strategies, and arguments. Cases are often made difficult because of vague, scarce, or conflicting information and because of continually evolving federal and state policy. Assignments require innovative and advanced application of legal theories in providing investigative, analytical, and research assistance to staff attorneys. Typically the same type of work is performed at all grade levels however the differences exist in the type of and extent to which the legal support is given. The difficulty of the work in this role depends on the intricacy of the cases (extensive and ambiguous case law, complex issues, etc.) and the predominant level of analysis actually assigned with regard to those cases. Grade 15 is a supervisor over the Legal Assistants. Primary contacts are with chief legal counsel, attorneys, courts and quasi-judicial bodies, dispute resolution staff, other agencies, and internal/external customers.

Working Conditions

Situations encountered may be high pressure, confrontational, and verbally combative. Ability to work under extreme pressure and high stress situations and circumstances with back-to-back meeting dates, examination deadlines, investigations, hearings, etc. Considerable time is spent at a computer terminal.

Education and Experience

- Grade 12: competencies and degrees of proficiency are typically acquired through a combination of education and experience equivalent to an associate's degree in paralegal studies from an accredited school and two years of experience in the legal field. Other combinations of education and experience will be evaluated on an individual basis.
- Grade 13: competencies and degrees of proficiency are typically acquired through a combination of education and experience equivalent to an associate's degree in paralegal studies from an accredited school and three years of paralegal experience including two years of legal and investigative research experience. Other combinations of education and experience will be evaluated on an individual basis.
- Grade 14: competencies and degrees of proficiency are typically acquired through a combination of education and experience equivalent to a bachelor's degree in paralegal studies, one year or a combination of coursework in a tax law-related field, and four years of legal and investigative experience. Other combinations of education and experience will be evaluated on an individual basis.
- Grade 15: competencies and degrees of proficiency are typically acquired through a combination of education and experience equivalent to a bachelor's degree in paralegal studies, one year or a combination of coursework in a tax law-related field, four years of legal and investigative experience, and one year of supervisor experience. Other combinations of education and experience will be evaluated on an individual basis.

Department Core Competencies

In addition to the role specific competencies, there are four, department core competencies that all employees are expected to successfully achieve. These are:

- *Interpersonal Skills:* Builds constructive and effective relationships with internal and external customers and is committed to meeting customer needs in a timely and accurate manner. Listens actively and attentively and demonstrates an appreciation of other perspectives. Builds the appropriate rapport required to do business. Openly demonstrates an understanding of and respect for the value of co-workers' contributions to the department mission.
- *Decision-Making and Accountability:* Considers the department's vision, mission, and values in making decisions and taking actions. Identifies and considers possible alternatives before making decisions. Bases decisions on achieving desired outcomes pursuant to the departmental business plan or management direction. Uses a combination of analysis, experience, and sound judgment that results in fairness and consistency, while being accountable for actions. When serious ethical issues are at stake, takes all necessary actions.
- *Commitment to Continuous Improvement:* Ability and willingness to continually seek greater efficiency in agency programs, is results driven, and meets changing requirements in work or direction. Adapts to changing conditions and work responsibilities. Accepts constructive criticism and suggestions and uses them to improve performance.
- *Personal and Work Ethics:* Creates own measures of excellence, and practices what he/she promotes. Sets goals that provide challenges and measures goal attainment regularly. Displays a contagious optimism about the work to be done. Goes beyond traditional ways to address issues despite obstacles or resistance. Is able to generate ideas, fresh perspectives, and original approaches and engages in open-minded thinking. Employs strategies to promote ideas and proposals to increase probability of acceptance. Mentors others to improve the performance necessary to achieve success. Reflects a belief that the results achieved are a direct result of his/her personal decisions and actions.

Grade Levels

Each grade level lists the essential duties that describe work performed 50 percent or more of the time (predominant work). Established work plans identify day-to-day tasks.

Grade 12

Predominant/Essential Duties

- Review case files and research applicable statutory and case law.
- Draft legal and administrative documents as appropriate (responses, notices, motions, litigation briefs, petitions, affidavits, writs, orders, discovery documents, stipulations, memoranda, letters, etc.).
- Review foreclosure actions to determine appropriate action and formulate any answers or disclaimers necessary based on those determinations.
- Evaluate and formulate preliminary research on interpretive questions or problems received from legal staff.

Grade 13

Predominant/Essential Duties

- Identify and organize legal issues, build a theory of a case, and determine the information necessary to support the theory through in-depth analysis and research of various sources.
- Research and analyze various sources of information such as federal and state statutes, court decisions, codes, rules, regulations, legislative histories, and other relevant public records through manual and electronic research methods.
- Summarize research and/or compile and compose appropriate legal documents.
- Evaluate the adequacy of the case file documentation and advise the attorney whether the actions taken are defensible and warrant further action through the legal process.
- Analyze the case and advise the attorney regarding legal strategies to proceed with the case (i.e., settlement, request for summary judgment, further pursuit of the case through the judicial process, etc.).
- Organize the products of discovery and evaluate how they will/may ultimately impact the agency's position.
- Draft legal answers to complaints, interrogatories, requests for production, briefs, legal memorandums, etc.
- Conduct pre-trial investigation and document preparation.
 - Locate and interview witnesses.
 - Schedule depositions.
 - Prepare witnesses for trial.
 - Compile exhibits.

Grade 14

Predominant/Essential Duties

- Research, document, and analyze current trends in case law, federal and state statutes, rules and regulations; ascertain the probable impact; recommend legislative changes; and provide guidance on policy modifications.
- Perform substantial in-depth analysis and evaluation in order to create legal opinions, summaries, and/or documents for applications having no precedent or guidelines.
- Review legal pleadings, documents, and correspondence in complex judicial cases to ensure all applicable statutory and court requirements are met.
- Compose and compile a detailed case analysis and formulate a case strategy and research plan for the case.

Grade 15

Predominant/Essential Duties

- Research, document, and analyze current trends in case law, federal and state statutes, rules and regulations; ascertain the probable impact; recommend legislative changes; and provide guidance on policy modifications.
- Perform substantial in-depth analysis and evaluation in order to create legal opinions, summaries, and/or documents for applications having no precedent or guidelines.
- Review legal pleadings, documents, and correspondence in complex judicial cases to ensure all applicable statutory and court requirements are met.
- Compose and compile a detailed case analysis and formulate a case strategy and research plan for the case.
- Must be able to supervise numerous projects at one time and determine priorities on a daily basis.
- Complete performance appraisals on subordinate staff.

- Supervise, coordinate, monitor, and review assigned duties of subordinate staff to ensure work plan goals are met and tasks are completed accurately.
- Make and enforce decisions dealing with hiring, discipline, individual performance, leave or flextime, and recommend termination.
- Assure that training is identified and properly assigned and conduct on-the-job training for staff.

Competencies and Degrees of Proficiency

The Competency/Proficiency Chart identifies the role specific competencies, degrees of proficiency, and guidance required for each grade level. Role specific competencies describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the essential duties. The degrees of proficiency indicate the difficulty and/or complexity level of the tasks and assignments.

Competency/Proficiency Chart - Paralegal Investigator Role

Competencies	Grade 12 Under Guidance	Grade 13 Minimal Guidance	Grade 14 Independently	Grade 15 Independently
Demonstrated knowledge of and ability to work within the legal system.	A	B	C	C
Demonstrated knowledge of law office practices and procedures.	A	B	C	C
Demonstrated ability to use legal research methods and techniques to identify critical elements and issues.	A	B	C	C
Demonstrated knowledge of administrative and court procedures.	A	B	B	B
Demonstrated ability to think creatively and recommend innovative solutions.	A	B	C	C
Proactively focus efforts and energy on successfully attaining goals and objectives, assuming accountability for decisions, actions, and results. Follow issues through to completion.	B	B	C	C
Demonstrated ability to provide timely and effective written, oral, and interpersonal communication.	A	B	C	C
Demonstrated knowledge and skill of word processing, spreadsheet, database, and software applications/programs relative to the role.	B	B	C	C
Demonstrated knowledge and effective application of federal/state statutes, administrative rules, and state policies and procedures relative to the role.	B	C	C	C
Demonstrated knowledge of the state tax system.	A	B	C	C
Demonstrated skill and ability to work on multiple tasks.	B	B	C	C
Demonstrated knowledge of preparation and use of legal documents.	B	C	C	C
Demonstrated knowledge of concepts and practices of personnel management and supervision.	N/A	N/A	N/A	C
Demonstrated skill and ability to identify and allocate resources.	N/A	N/A	N/A	B

Degree of Proficiency

A: A degree of knowledge, skill, or ability commensurate with elementary-level tasks and assignments.

B: A degree of knowledge, skill, or ability commensurate with intermediate-level tasks and assignments.

C: A degree of knowledge, skill, or ability commensurate with advanced-level tasks and assignments.

D: An advanced degree of knowledge, skill, or ability commensurate with considerable experience and the application of the competency to non-standard tasks and assignments.

E: The most advanced degree of knowledge, skill, or ability, evidencing complete mastery and understanding of the subject.